

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) An electromechanical drive assembly, comprising:
a magnet structure which comprises at least one permanent magnet and is shaped to define an air gap; and
a cylindrical coil which is received in the gap and movable axially therein relative to the magnet structure, the coil comprising at least one coil winding;
wherein [[:]] the material and/or the shape of the magnet structure is such that the path of the magnetic flux of the permanent magnet is split.
2. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1, wherein the surfaces of the magnet structure defining the gap are shaped so that the path of the magnetic flux of the permanent magnet is split in the region of the gap.
3. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1, wherein the material of the magnet structure defining the gap is chosen so that the path of the magnetic flux of the permanent magnet is split in the region of the gap.
4. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 2, wherein the

magnet structure has in at least one of its surfaces defining the air gap at least one annular recess which extends to the gap.

5. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 3, wherein at least one of the surfaces of the magnet structure defining the air gap is formed from a material of reduced magnetic permeability relative to the remainder of the magnet structure.

6. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1, wherein the magnet structure comprises ~~at least one permanent magnet~~ one or more permanent magnets and ~~at least one pole piece~~ one or more pieces of ferromagnetic material.

7. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 6, wherein the gap is defined entirely by the one or more pole pieces ~~piece(s)~~.

8. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 6, wherein the gap is defined in part by the one or more pole pieces ~~piece(s)~~ and in part by the one or more permanent magnets ~~magnet(s)~~.

9. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 6 ~~any of claims 6 to 8~~, wherein the one or more permanent magnets ~~magnet(s)~~ and/or the one or more pole pieces ~~are piece(s)~~ ~~is/are~~ shaped to define at least one annular recess in the magnet structure which extends

to and merges with the air gap.

10. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 9, in which the one or more pole pieces are piece(s)-is/are shaped so that the [[or]] at least one recess extends from the air gap to the permanent magnet.

11. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 6 ~~claims 6 to 8~~, wherein the magnet structure comprises at least one piece of material of reduced magnetic permeability relative to the one or more pole pieces piece(s), the [[or]] at least one piece of reduced permeability material being annular in shape and extending from the air gap, where it defines a portion of the surface thereof, to the one or more permanent magnets magnet(s).

12. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1, wherein alternate annular portions of an inner surface of the air gap are formed from the magnet structure and from a material of reduced magnetic permeability relative to the remainder of the magnet structure.

13. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1, wherein alternate annular portions of an outer surface of the air gap are formed from the magnet structure and from a material of reduced magnetic permeability relative to the remainder of the magnet structure.

14. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 12 ~~claims 12 and 13~~,

wherein the annular portions of the inner surface are aligned across the gap with the annular portions of the outer surface.

15. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1, wherein the surface of the magnet structure defining an inner surface of the air gap is shaped so that the inner surface of the air gap is interrupted by a plurality of annular recesses which extend to and merge with the gap.

16. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1, wherein the surface of the magnet structure defining an outer surface of the air gap is shaped so that the outer surface of the air gap is interrupted by a plurality of annular recesses which extend to and merge with the gap.

17. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 15 ~~claims 15 and 16~~, wherein the inner annular recesses are aligned across the gap with the outer annular recesses.

18. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1, wherein alternate annular portions of one of the inner and the outer surfaces of the air gap are formed from the magnet structure and from a material of reduced magnetic permeability relative to the remainder of the magnet structure and the surface of the magnet structure defining the other of the inner and the outer surface of the air gap is shaped so that the said other surface of the air gap is interrupted

by a plurality of annular recesses which extend to and merge with the gap, the annular portions of reduced magnetic permeability being aligned across the gap with the annular recesses.

19. (currently amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The assembly according to claim 12 ~~any of claims 12 to 17~~, wherein there are at least two said annular portions of reduced permeability ~~or at least two said annular recesses in each cylindrical wall of the air gap.~~

20. (currently amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The assembly according to claim 15 ~~claims 12 to 17~~, wherein there are at least four said annular recesses extending to and merging with the air gap.

21. (currently amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The assembly according to claim 1 ~~any preceding claim~~, wherein the coil comprises a former on which are formed two or more axially-spaced coil windings.

22. (currently amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The assembly according to claim 21, wherein the axial extent of the windings ~~winding(s)~~ is less than the axial extent of the air gap.

23. (currently amended) ~~[[An]]~~ The assembly according to claim 1 ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~, further comprising first and second permanent magnets which are spaced-apart in the axial direction of the air gap.

24. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1 ~~claims 1 to 6~~, further comprising first, second and third permanent magnets which are spaced-apart in the axial direction of the air gap.

25. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1 ~~any preceding claim~~, wherein the magnet structure and the ~~voice~~ coil are substantially cylindrically symmetric.

26. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1, wherein the magnet structure comprises a plurality of generally-conical pole pieces which are arranged about a common axis and nested within one another with air spaces therebetween^[1], the outer edges of the pole pieces defining the inner wall of the air gap.

27. (currently amended) [[An]] The assembly according to claim 1 ~~any preceding claim~~, wherein the air gap and the coil are each cylindrical.

28. (original) A magnet and coil assembly comprising at least one magnetic circuit which is split so as to mitigate a permeability thereof.

29. (currently amended) A magnet and coil assembly comprising:

~~at least one magnet~~ one or more magnets;

~~at least one coil~~ one or more coils; and

~~at least one magnetic circuit~~ one or more magnetic circuits between the one or more magnets ~~magnet(s)~~ and the one or more voice coils ~~voice coil(s)~~, at least one of the magnetic circuits ~~circuit(s)~~ being split so as to mitigate a permeability thereof.

30. (original) A loudspeaker comprising an assembly according to claim 29 and a cone which is attached to the coil.

31. (canceled)

32. (new) The assembly according to claim 7, wherein the one or more permanent magnets and/or the one or more pole pieces are shaped to define at least one annular recess in the magnet structure which extends to and merges with the air gap.

33. (new) The assembly according to claim 8, wherein the one or more permanent magnets and/or the one or more pole pieces are shaped to define at least one annular recess in the magnet structure which extends to and merges with the air gap.

34. (new) The assembly according to claim 32, wherein the one or more pole pieces are shaped so that the at least one recess extends from the air gap to the permanent magnet.

35. (new) The assembly according to claim 33, wherein the one or more pole pieces

are shaped so that the at least one recess extends from the air gap to the permanent magnet.

36. (new) The assembly according to claim 7, wherein the magnet structure comprises at least one piece of material of reduced magnetic permeability relative to the one or more pole pieces, the at least one piece of reduced permeability material being annular in shape and extending from the air gap, where it defines a portion of the surface thereof, to the one or more permanent magnets.

37. (new) The assembly according to claim 8, wherein the magnet structure comprises at least one piece of material of reduced magnetic permeability relative to the one or more pole pieces, the at least one piece of reduced permeability material being annular in shape and extending from the air gap, where it defines a portion of the surface thereof, to the one or more permanent magnets.

38. (new) The assembly according to claim 13, wherein the annular portions of the inner surfaces are aligned across the gap with the annular portions of the outer surface.

39. (new) The assembly according to claim 16, wherein the inner annular recesses are aligned across the gap with the outer annular recesses.

40. (new) The assembly according to claim 15, wherein there are at least two said

annular recesses in each cylindrical wall of the air gap.

41. (new) The assembly according to claim 16, wherein there are at least four said annular recesses extending to and merging with the air gap.